



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Freeze your Winter Utility Bills *Tips to Conserve Energy While Staying Warm*

MADISON – Worried about winter utility bills? The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) offers the following easy, low-cost steps that can help reduce your energy use while staying safe. Assistance is also available to those who may need it.

TIPS FOR MINIMIZING HEAT BILLS

- Find and repair air drafts from windows and doorways.
- Keep heating vents clear of rugs or furniture.
- Ensure your furnace has clean air filters.
- When doing laundry, use cold water and adjust water levels to fit the load size. Also, clean the lint filter after every dryer load.
- Lower water heater temperatures to 115-120 degrees.
- Remove window air conditioning units to stop winter drafts from coming through its vents.
- Open the drapes or blinds during sunny days to take advantage of solar heat. Close them at night to reduce heat loss.
- Turn down the thermostat several degrees when leaving the house for extended periods of time or before going to bed.
- Close off rooms of your home that are not used.

UNSAFE WAYS TO MINIMIZE HEAT BILLS

When temperatures drop, many families turn to alternative heating sources to avoid the costs of utility bills. Stay safe by remembering the following:

- Never try to heat a room with a gas stove or oven. This can cause suffocation by producing deadly carbon monoxide fumes.
- Practice caution when using a wood stove. Fumes, particles, and smoke can be absorbed into the structure of a house, causing respiratory problems. Only burn dry, untreated wood and do not install outdoor wood-fired furnaces within 500 feet of the nearest residence.
- Never try to heat a room by using a portable generator. Carbon monoxide is released from the generator's exhaust, fires are commonly caused by improper refueling, and shocks caused by improper use or wrong connection can occur.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Due to increased federal funding and recent changes in program eligibility, many more households across the state may be eligible for heating assistance this winter. No family should have to choose between paying their utility bill and paying for other necessities. There are resources available to those who need it.

Residents may qualify for assistance paying their heating bill through the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP), which provides financial assistance to low-income residents who may struggle to pay utility bills this winter. WHEAP is part of the state's comprehensive Home Energy Plus program which provides assistance with emergency energy needs, emergency furnace repairs, conservation service and weatherizing low-income households. For more information about how to apply for the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program, call the Home Energy Plus hotline at 866-432-8947, or visit www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov.

Consumers who are having trouble paying their energy bills and would like to schedule a payment agreement should call their local utility directly. The phone numbers for the largest utilities in Wisconsin are listed below.

- Alliant Energy, 1-800-862-6222
- Madison Gas & Electric, 608-252-7144
- Superior Water, Light & Power Company, 715-395-6201
- We Energies, 1-800-842-4565
- Wisconsin Public Service Corporation, 1-800-450-7260
- Xcel Energy, 1-800-895-4999

Consumers can help improve energy efficiency in their home by requesting a home energy audit through Wisconsin's Focus on Energy Program. Focus on Energy consultants visit homes and suggest improvements to significantly lower energy bills, while staying safe and comfortable. For more information about home energy audits, call Focus on Energy at 1-800-762-7077 or visit <http://www.focusonenergy.org>.

For more information about energy conservation, visit the PSC's website at: <http://psc.wi.gov/consumerinfo/conservation/indexConservation.htm>.

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